



# Read to Me News

From Your Public Library & Idaho's Read to Me Program

## First Friends

Even as toddlers, friends play a special role in children's lives. Friendship helps build self esteem and teaches empathy. But, the seeds of friendship begin before the toddler years, planted when our children are still infants.

The basic building block of friendship is that special relationship between a child and his parent. After children have developed really strong, trusting relationships with their mom or dad, they can then go on and expand their world.

When children are age one or two, they become interested in other children. They want to be with them, play with them, and watch them. Making friends begins with learning how to play. The first type of play that you'll see your child engage in is solitary play — playing alone or watching others. People get concerned about children playing alone and think that it isn't really play. But it's fine for children to have time alone and watch others.

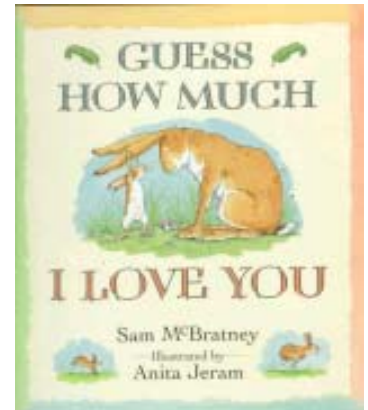
At about 18 months we begin to see children engage in parallel play — playing side by side but doing different things. They are getting comfortable with each other and watching each other. Soon however they will move into cooperative play where you see back and forth exchange and communication.

As parents, we can provide opportunities for our children to interact with other young children. Take your child to a library storytime or visit a playground. Model positive interactions by introducing yourself to other parents. Help resolve occasional conflicts.

## Book of the Month

***Guess How Much I Love You*, by Sam McBratney**

During a bedtime game, every time Little Nutbrown Hare demonstrates how much he loves his father, Big Nutbrown Hare gently shows him that the love is returned even more.



Sam McBratney has won many awards for his children's books. In 2004, he reunited with *Guess How Much I Love You* illustrator Anita Jeram to produce the follow-up, ***You're All My Favourites***. Check your library for other titles by McBratney:

***In the Light of the Moon and other Bedtime Stories***, illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton. Offers a collection of eight stories with a variety of themes.

***I'm Sorry***, illustrated by Jennifer Eachus. When one best friend shouts at the other, both are sad and hope the other will apologize.

***Just You and Me***, illustrated by Ivan Bates. As a storm approaches, the geese join other animals in searching for a place to hide.



***Just one!*** illustrated by Ivan Bates. Digger the squirrel wonders how to carry home a big pile of blackberries that he and his friend have picked.

## Building Baby's Brains



Many of the things you already do as a parent contribute to your child's brain development. Even simple activities like cuddling or reading are important. When you rock your baby, his brain builds the emotional connections that lead to healthier relationships. When you read aloud, the brain pathways for language and reading become stronger. Here's a few other things you can do to build brain connections:

**Create a safe environment.** When a baby feels stress, the brain responds by producing a chemical called cortisol. High levels of cortisol can slow brain development. You can reduce your baby's stress by making his world safe, responsive, and predictable. Remove any physical threats. Respond when he cries. And create predictable daily routines so that he learns what to expect from his world.

**Provide a nurturing environment for your child.** Include holding, playing, talking, reading and lots of loving care.

**Help your child express feelings.** Teach by example. Use encouraging words.

**Take care of yourself.** Parents who are stressed tend to pass some of that stress on to their babies. And stress can slow brain development. So take some time for yourself. Find people who can support you as a parent. Talk to other parents about their experiences. The better you take care of yourself, the better equipped you will be to care for your baby.

**Celebrate and reinforce your child's accomplishments.** Think about how much they are learning about the world every day.

**Enjoy the time you spend with your little one.** Play music, sing, talk, and listen to your child. Get down on the floor with him and play.

## Song to Share

**Yes, I Do**

*Sung to: Three Blind Mice*

I love you, I love you

Yes, I do, yes, I do

I love you every night and day,

I love you when I work and play,

I love you in so many ways,

I love you!



## Fingerplay of the month

### These Are Baby's Fingers

These are baby's fingers (*touch fingers*)

These are baby's toes (*touch toes*)

This is baby's tummy button  
(*point to belly button*)

Round and round it goes  
(*make circles on tummy*)

It's never too early  
to read to your child.  
Visit your public library today!

